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Europäische Patentamt
European Patent Office
Offic européen des brevets



(11) Publication number: **0 559 895 A1**

44

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION
published in accordance with Art.
158(3) EPC

(21) Application number: 91920822.3

(51) Int. Cl.⁵: A61K 37/04, C07K 15/06

(22) Date of filing: 29.11.91

(86) International application number:
PCT/JP91/01675

(87) International publication number:
WO 92/09303 (11.06.92 92/13)

(30) Priority: 30.11.90 JP 339949/90

(43) Date of publication of application:
15.09.93 Bulletin 93/37

(84) Designated Contracting States:
DE ES GB

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EP 0 559 895 A1

(54) ALBUMIN PREPARATION AND PRESERVATION THEREOF.

(57) A highly safe albumin preparation which can be preserved while preventing the release of aluminum from the container to thereby keep the aluminum content very low, by preserving an aqueous albumin solution in a soft glass container dealcalized by treating with, for example, sulfur dioxide gas or an ammonium sulfate solution instead of the conventional hard glass container which releases aluminum which has been believed to cause various diseases such as dialysis dementia, bone diseases, hypochromic anemia or Alzheimer's disease.

Technical Field

This invention relates to an albumin preparation and a method for preserving the same. More particularly, it relates to a liquid preparation of albumin of plasma origin and a method for preserving the same whereby an increase in the aluminum content of said preparation during storage is avoided.

Technical Background

Serum albumin, the most abundant protein in plasma, contributes to the maintenance of osmotic pressure and binds to and transports nutrients and metabolites. Preparations containing the above-mentioned albumin have been used in the treatment of hypoalbuminemia and hemorrhagic shock due to a loss of albumin or in the ability to synthesize albumin.

Generally, albumin preparations are prepared from plasma via several purification stages. During detailed studies on contaminants of albumin preparations, the present inventors found that albumin preparations contain a significantly large amount of aluminum.

In recent years, attention has been directed to the correlation between aluminum and various diseases. For example, it is believed that bone diseases accompanied by serious pain, which are observed frequently in patients experiencing hemodialysis or prolonged instillation, are caused by aluminum contained in solutions employed in those treatments.

It is considered, furthermore, that dialysis dementia, bone diseases and hypochromic anemia observed in patients undergoing hemodialysis for treating chronic renal insufficiency are caused by the accumulation of aluminum in serum.

In addition, the correlation between aluminum in brain tissue and Alzheimer's disease (senile dementia) has attracted attention.

In view of those observations, attempts have been made world-wide to control the aluminum content of medical preparations.

There are a variety of hard glasses (borosilicate glass; falling within Class I in the Glass Classification of USP) and soft glasses (soda-lime glass, falling within Class II in the Glass Classification of USP) having a dealkalized surface which serve as materials of containers for injectable materials. Soft glass has a low melting point, can be easily molded and is less expensive than hard glass. These materials differ from each other in other physical properties, including chemical resistance. Thus different glasses have been used depending on the drugs to be contained. Hard glass containers are usable for preserving acidic, neutral or alkaline drug-containing solutions. On the other hand, soft glass containers are usable for preserving acidic and neutral drug-containing solutions, whereas the suitability for storing alkaline drug-containing solutions must be confirmed.

Hard glass containers which are excellent in chemical resistance have been employed conventionally and uniformly for preserving albumin preparations.

Disclosure of the Invention

The present inventors have conducted extensive studies to reduce the aluminum content of an albumin preparation. As a result, the instant inventors found that a significantly high aluminum content of the final product is attributed to the contamination of the albumin preparation with aluminum during the production stage of the albumin preparation. Thus the present inventors have found that the aluminum content can be reduced by treating an albumin-containing aqueous solution with an anion exchanger during preparation.

It also has been found that when a liquid albumin preparation in which the aluminum content has been reduced by such a purification method is preserved in a conventional hard glass container, the aluminum content of the preparation increases during storage.

The present invention has been achieved to solve those problems. It is an object of the present invention to provide an albumin preparation, wherein an increase in the aluminum content thereof during preparation is minimized, and a method for preserving the same.

The present inventors further have studied methods for preserving an albumin preparation. As a result, they have found that the aluminum content of an albumin preparation can be maintained at a low level by using a soft glass container with a dealkalized surface as a preservation container. The present invention has been completed based on those findings and provides an aqueous solution containing albumin of plasma origin which is preserved in a dealkalized soft glass container.

The present invention is described in detail below.

1. Albumin-containing aqueous solution

The albumin-containing aqueous solution to be used in the present invention is not restricted so long as it is usable as a drug. To achieve the object of the present invention, namely, the reduction of aluminum content of the preparation, it is preferable to use an aqueous solution of albumin of plasma origin which has been treated with an anion exchanger so as to eliminate the contaminating aluminum and, if required, further purified with the use of a cation exchanger. The purification method is hereinafter described in detail.

(1) Starting material

The origin of the albumin to be used as the starting material in the present invention is not restricted. Particularly, those originating from mammalian (for example, human, bovine or rabbit) are usable. It is preferable to use albumin of human origin. As a starting material for preparing albumin, the fraction V obtained by Cohn's cold-alcohol fractionation method is usable.

(2) Treatment with anion exchanger

The amino exchange treatment may be effected by dissolving the above-mentioned albumin in a suitable purified water and then contacting the albumin-containing aqueous solution thus obtained with an anion exchanger.

The albumin concentration of the albumin-containing aqueous solution may be adjusted usually to from 0.1 to 30 % (w/v, the same shall apply hereinafter unless otherwise noted), preferably from approximately 1 to 10 %.

As the anion exchanger, any insoluble carrier having an anion exchanging group (for example, quaternary alkylammonium base or diethylaminoethyl group) may be used. More particularly, anion exchangers commonly employed in the art, for example, DEAE-Sepharose®, Q-Sepharose® (each a product of Pharmacia), DEAE-Toyopearl®, QAE-Toyopearl® (each a product of Tosoh Co.), A200 Cellulofine® (a product of Seikagaku Co.) and other known anion exchange resins may be used. From the viewpoint of the efficiency for eliminating aluminum, it is preferable to use strong anion exchangers, such as Q-Sepharose and QAE-Toyopearl.

The treatment with the above-mentioned anion exchanger may be carried out by contacting the albumin-containing aqueous solution with the anion exchanger. The amount of the anion exchanger may be controlled appropriately depending on the aluminum content of the albumin-containing aqueous solution, the amount of contaminating proteins and the exchanging capacity of the anion exchanger. In general, from 2 to 5 ml, usually about 3 ml, of the anion exchanger is used per gram of albumin. The treatment may be effected either by the column method or by the batch method. The column method is preferable from the viewpoint of the efficiency of eliminating aluminum.

In the case of the column method, the above-mentioned albumin-containing aqueous solution is adjusted to a pH value of from 3 to 6, preferably from 4.5 to 5.5, and to a salt concentration of from 0.001 to 0.2 M, preferably from 0.001 to 0.05 M, in terms of sodium chloride. Then the solution is passed through an anion exchange column equilibrated with a buffer solution [for example, 0.02 M sodium acetate buffer (pH 5.1)]. Next, the column was developed with the same buffer solution and the unadsorbed material is recovered. To prevent the denaturation of albumin, the above procedure is carried out at a low temperature (usually, 10 °C or below).

In the case of the batch method, the anion exchanger is added to the albumin-containing aqueous solution which has been adjusted to the above-mentioned conditions. After mixing at 10 °C or below for 30 minutes to 2 hours, the solution is separated from the anion exchanger by, for example, centrifugation wherein the supernatant is recovered.

(3) Treatment with cation exchanger

In the formulation of the albumin-containing aqueous solution, which has been purified by the treatment with the anion exchanger as described above, into a pharmaceutical preparation, it is desirable next to treat the preparation with a cation exchanger, after adjusting the pH value and concentration if required, to thereby eliminate contaminating proteins. Any cation exchanger can be used as long as it is an insoluble carrier having a cation exchanging group (for example, sulfo groups or carboxyl groups). Specific examples thereof include cation exchangers commonly used in the art, for example, SP-Sephadex® (a product of Pharmacia), SP-Toyopearl®, TSKgel SP-5PW®, (each a product of Tosoh Co.) and other known cation

xchange resins. From the viewpoint of the efficiency for eliminating contaminating proteins, it is preferable to use strong cation exchangers, such as SP-Sepharose and SP-Toyopearl.

The treatment with the above-described cation exchanger may be carried out by contacting the albumin-containing aqueous solution, which has been purified by the above anion exchanger treatment, with the cation exchanger. The amount of the cation exchanger may be controlled depending on the amount of contaminating proteins in the albumin-containing aqueous solution and the exchanging capacity of the cation exchanger. In general, from 2 to 5 ml, usually about 2 ml, of the cation exchanger is used per gram of albumin. The treatment may be effected either by the column method or by the batch method. The column method is preferable from the viewpoint of the efficiency of eliminating contaminating proteins.

In the case of the column method, the above-described albumin-containing aqueous solution is adjusted to a pH value of from 4 to 8, preferably from 4.5 to 6.0, more preferably 5.5, and to a salt concentration of from 0.001 to 0.2 M, preferably from 0.001 to 0.05 M, in terms of sodium chloride. Then the solution is passed through an cation exchange column equilibrated with a buffer solution [for example, 0.02 M sodium acetate buffer (pH 5.5)]. Next, the column is developed with the same buffer solution and the unadsorbed material is recovered. To prevent the denaturation of albumin, the above procedure preferably is carried out at a low temperature (usually, 10 °C or below).

In the case of the batch method, the cation exchanger is added to the albumin-containing aqueous solution which has been adjusted to the above-mentioned conditions. After mixing at 10 °C or below for 30 minutes to 2 hours, the solution is separated from the cation exchanger by, for example, centrifugation and the supernatant is recovered.

2. Filling in preservation container

The albumin-containing aqueous solution, in which the aluminum content and the contaminating protein content have been reduced by the above-described treatments with the anion exchanger and the cation exchanger, then is adjusted to an appropriate concentration and formulated into a pharmaceutical preparation of the desired form by, for example, filling in a preservation container. Next, the container is heat treated and thus an albumin preparation is obtained.

The preservation container to be used here is not restricted particularly so long as it is a dealkalized soft glass container. The soft glass comprises, for example, from 65 to 75 % of SiO₂, from 0.5 to 4 % of Al₂O₃, from 10 to 20 % of Na₂O, from 1 to 2 % of K₂O, from 5 to 15 % of CaO, 2 % or less of Fe₂O₃ and from 0.5 to 4 % of MgO (cf. for example, "Encyclopaedia Chimica", published by Kyoritsu Shuppan R.K.).

The dealkalization may be effected by, for example, treating with sulfurous acid gas or ammonium sulfate solution.

The above-mentioned heat treatment is effected to inactivate viruses which might invade the albumin preparation during the formulation process. The treatment is carried out by heating the aqueous albumin solution having an albumin concentration of 5 to 30 %, usually 5 or 20 to 25 %, to a temperature and for a period enough to inactivate the contaminating viruses. For example, it may be heated to from 50 to 70 °C, preferably about 60 °C, for from 5 to 20 hours, preferably about 10 hours. In the heat treatment, a stabilizer for albumin (for example, N-acetyltryptophan sodium or sodium caprylate) may be added either alone or in the form of a mixture, if required. The albumin stabilizers may be used in an amount of from 20 to 60 mg, preferably 40 mg, per gram of the albumin contained in the preparation.

The aluminum content of the albumin preparation thus obtained is reduced to about 200 ppb (determined by atomic absorption spectrometry, the same will apply hereinafter) or less. In general, a preferable aluminum content of 100 ppb or below can be achieved.

Best Mode to Practice the Invention

The following Example and Test Example are given to further illustrate the present invention in greater detail, and not by way of restriction.

Example 1

(1) Preparation of albumin-containing aqueous solution

A paste of the fraction V (500 g) obtained by Cohn's cold alcohol fractionation of serum was dissolved in 2.0 liter of cold sterile distilled water and the pH value of the solution was adjusted to 4.6 with acetic acid. After stirring for about 1 hour, the solution was filtered (filter: 0.45 µm) at about -2 °C. Another 2.0 liters of

cold steril distilled water wer added and th pH value of th mixtur was adjusted to 5.1 with 1 N sodium hydroxid to thereby obtain an albumin-containing aqueous solution.

(2) Treatment with anion xchanger

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QAE-Toyopearl (580 ml) was packed into a column [5 cm (diameter) x 18 cm (height)] and thoroughly washed with 0.5 M sodium chloride. The exchanger was equilibrated with 0.02 M sodium acetate (pH 5.1) to obtain an anion exchange column. Then the albumin-containing aqueous solution obtained in the above (1) was passed over the column and the column was washed further with cold 0.02 M sodium acetate (pH 5.1, 10 2 liter). The buffer was collected and the pH value of the mixture was adjusted to 5.5 with 0.8 M sodium hydrogen-carbonate.

(3) Treatment with cation exchanger

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SP-Toyopearl (400 ml) was packed into a column and thoroughly washed with 0.5 M sodium chlorid . The exchanger was equilibrated with 0.02 M sodium acetate (pH 5.5) to obtain a cation exchange column. Then the albumin-containing aqueous solution obtained in the above (2) was passed through the column and further washed with 0.02 M sodium acetate (pH 5.1, 1.2 liter). The buffer was collected and the mixture was dialyzed and concentrated with Pellicon to give $A_{280} = 149$ (albumin concentration : 28 %).

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(4) Filling in container and heat treatment

To the albumin-containing aqueous solution obtained in the above (3) was added a stabilizer solution, containing 5.55 g of N-acetyltryptophan and 3.89 g of sodium caprylate in 100 ml, at a ratio of 1.2 ml per 10 25 ml of said albumin-containing aqueous solution. After adjusting the pH value to 6.85 with 1 N sodium hydroxide, the mixture was sterile filtered. Next, the albumin concentration was adjusted to 25 % and a defined amount of the solution was pipetted into a soft glass container (50 ml) treated with sulfurous acid gas. Then the container was heated to 60 °C for 10 hours to thereby obtain an albumin pharmaceutical preparation.

30 The aluminum content of the thus obtained albumin preparation determined by atomic absorption spectrometry was 70 ppb.

Test Example

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Changes in aluminum content of an albumin preparation during preservation were compared wh n using a hard glass container and when using a soft glass container of the present invention. The soft glass container was surface-treated with sulfurous acid gas. Table 1 shows the composition of each preservation glass container.

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The albumin-containing aqueous solution purified in accordance with Example 1 (1) to (3) was distributed into the above hard glass container and the soft glass container. Both containers were heated in accordance with Example 1 (4) to prepare an albumin pharmaceutical preparation. Each albumin preparation thus obtained was preserved at 40 °C for 3 months and then the aluminum content thereof was determined by atomic absorption spectrometry. Table 2 shows the results.

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Table 1

| Component | Hard glass (%) | Soft glass (%) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| SiO ₂ | 70.0 | 72.6 |
| B ₂ O ₃ | 9.7 | 0.1 |
| Al ₂ O ₃ | 5.8 | 1.9 |
| Na ₂ O | 7.8 | 12.6 |
| K ₂ O | 1.8 | 1.0 |
| CaO | 0.7 | 11.0 |
| Fe ₂ O ₃ | 0.05 | 0.04 |
| MgO | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| SO ₃ | 0.08 | 0.23 |
| ZnO | 1.4 | 0 |
| BzO | 2.6 | 0 |

Table 2

| Preservation container | Aluminum content (ppb) | |
|---|------------------------|---------------|
| | Before filling | After storage |
| Hard glass container | < 50 | 120 |
| Soft glass container (invention method) | < 50 | < 50 |

As the above Table 2 clearly shows, the aluminum content was increased when the hard glass container was used for the preservation, while no increase in the aluminum content was found when using a dealkalized soft glass container for the preservation according to the present invention.

Industrial Applicability

In the method for preserving an albumin preparation of the present invention, a dealkalized soft glass preservation container is used. According to the method of the present invention, the aluminum content of an albumin preparation can be minimized during the validated period of said preparation (30 °C or below, 2 years) and thus a product of a high safety can be provided. When a purified albumin-containing aqueous solution in which the aluminum content has been reduced by treating with an anion exchanger, is used as an albumin-containing aqueous solution, in particular, the aluminum content of the albumin preparation can be reduced to about 200 ppb or below. Hence, because an increase in the aluminum content during preservation is minimized, the aluminum content of the albumin preparation can be maintained at a low level and therefore a highly safe preparation with a long shelf-life can be provided.

Claims

1. An albumin preparation obtainable by filling an aqueous solution comprising albumin of plasma origin in a dealkalized soft glass container.
2. A method for preserving an albumin preparation which comprises preserving an aqueous solution comprising albumin of plasma origin in a dealkalized soft glass container.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/JP91/01675

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| I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (If several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ¹ | | |
| According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC | | |
| Int. Cl ⁵ A61K37/04, C07K15/06 | | |
| II. FIELDS SEARCHED | | |
| Minimum Documentation Searched ² | | |
| Classification System | Classification Symbols | |
| IPC | A61K37/04, C07K15/06, C03C23/00 | |
| Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ³ | | |
| | | |
| III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁴ | | |
| Category ⁵ | Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹² | Relevant to Claim No. ¹³ |
| X | JP, A, 61-236635 (Toyo Glass K.K.), October 21, 1986 (21. 10. 86), Claim, lines 10 to 17, lower left column, page 1 | 1, 2 |
| X | JP, A, 59-152245 (Nippon Tai-Sanbin Kogyo K.K.), August 30, 1984 (30. 08. 84), Line 17, lower left column, page 1 to line 1, upper left column, page 2 | 1, 2 |
| <p>⁶ Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁴</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</p> <p>"A" document member of the same patent family</p> | | |
| IV. CERTIFICATION | | |
| Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search | Date of Mailing of this International Search Report | |
| February 24, 1992 (24. 02. 92) | March 10, 1992 (10. 03. 92) | |
| International Searching Authority | Signature of Authorized Officer | |
| Japanese Patent Office | | |

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